

PRESS RELEASE

Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

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Conyers Disheartened by Supreme Court Decision Obliterating Antitrust Law in Telecom Industry

Rep. John Conyers, Jr. issued the following statement regarding today's Supreme Court decision in *Verizon v. Trinko*:

"Today, the Supreme Court dealt a serious blow to competition in the telecommunications industry. In deciding that violations of the 1996 Telecommunications Act are immune from antitrust scrutiny, the Supreme Court essentially gives monopolists *carte blanche* to do whatever they want in the name of efficiency. This is surely not what Congress intended in drafting the 1996 Act, and the only response we can give is to draft legislation on a bipartisan basis fixing the Supreme Court's horrible blunder.

Not only does this ruling completely ignore the entire history of antitrust and telecom law, beginning with the breakup of the system in 1974, it also completely ignores the will of Congress and the Judiciary Committee. Then-Chairman Hyde and I, along with many other members of the Judiciary Committee, spent countless hours drafting the 1996 Telecommunications Act to preserve a role for the Department of Justice in enforcing the antitrust laws in this industry. We were very clear in our intentions: violations of duties under the Act can be relevant in determining whether there are antitrust violations.

The Supreme Court's ruling is a blow to competition. As a result of this ruling, consumers can no longer bring antitrust claims against the Bell Companies for serious anticompetitive conduct. And it completely guts antitrust law so that the Bells are actually encouraged to engage in anticompetitive activity."

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